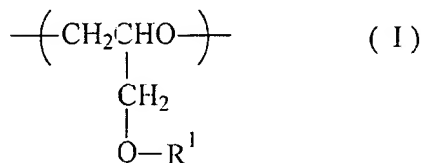


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A surface modifier for an inorganic solid, which comprises a polyether having a monomeric unit represented by formula (I):



wherein R¹ represents ~~a hydrogen atom~~; an optionally substituted C₁₋₅₀ hydrocarbon, C₁₋₅₀ fluoroalkyl, C₆₋₅₀ fluoroaryl or Si₁₋₅₀ siloxysilylpropyl group; or a group represented by $\text{---}(\text{AO})_m\text{---R}^2$:

in which R² represents an optionally substituted C₁₋₄₂ hydrocarbon, C₁₋₄₂ fluoroalkyl, C₆₋₄₂ fluoroaryl or Si₁₋₄₀ siloxysilylpropyl group; A represents a C₂₋₃ alkylene group; m is a number selected from 1 to 100; and m×A's may be the same or different.

2. (Original) An inorganic solid having at least a part of its surface coated with the surface modifier defined in Claim 1.

3. (Original) A composition of a synthetic resin, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

4. (Original) A composition of a rubber, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

5. (Original) A composition of a wax, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

6. (Original) A composition of a liquid, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

7. (Original) A composition of a flame-retardant resin, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

8. (Original) A method which comprises treating a surface of an inorganic solid with the polyether as defined in Claim 1 and dispersing it in a medium.

9. (Original) A method which comprises treating a surface of an inorganic solid with the polyether as defined in Claim 1 to modify the surface.

10. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim [[7]] 8, wherein the medium is a synthetic resin, a rubber, a wax, a flame-retardant resin composition or a liquid.

11. - 13. (Cancelled)

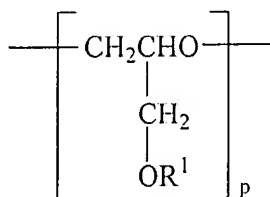
14. (New) A method of dispersing an inorganic solid as defined in Claim 1 in a medium, which comprises:

modifying the surface of an inorganic solid with the polyether as defined in Claim 1, and dispersing the modified inorganic solid in a medium.

15. (New) The method claimed in Claim 14 in which the medium is a synthetic resin, a rubber, a wax, a flame-retardant resin composition or a liquid.

16. (New) A method of modifying a surface of an inorganic solid, which comprises: treating the surface of an inorganic solid with the polyether as defined in Claim 1 to modify the surface.

17. (New) A surface modifier for an inorganic solid, which comprises a polyether having a monomeric unit represented by formula:



wherein R^1 represents a hydrogen atom, an optionally substituted C_{1-50} hydrocarbon, C_{1-50} fluoroalkyl, C_{6-50} fluoroaryl or Si_{1-50} siloxysilylpropyl group; or a group represented by $-(AO)_m-R^2$; in which R^2 represents an optionally substituted C_{1-42} hydrocarbon, C_{1-42} fluoroalkyl, C_{6-42} fluoroaryl or Si_{1-40} siloxysilylpropyl group; A represents a C_{2-3} alkylene group; m is a number selected from 1 to 100; m x A's may be the same or different; and p is 67-100,000.